881
304 friends and receiving presents of fowls. Girls, in addition, have their bodies scarified on the sides and back. From this time on until marriage the boys live in the bachelors' hut and the girls in the unmarried women's quarters. There is no mention by any of the authorities of an age-set system.

DEATH

764 The dead are buried close to their homes, a man on his right side with the hand under the head and a woman on her left side, also with the hand under the head.(1)

765 Friends and relatives gather shortly after death and, if the deceased was a man of importance, the whole of his clan is represented. Every man brings his companion bull and rides it. All dress up as if for war and the *buru* party takes place. If the dead man was not very important the mourning is limited to shaving the head and painting the body with white clay. Offerings are put on the grave of the deceased.

4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Luo FL11

Their huts are very similar to those of the Bantu Kavirondo, but they are a trifle lower, and are generally built solely of reeds (*mabua*). The huts are dug out inside to a depth of 18 inches or 2 feet; the hut is plastered with the earth dug out from the interior. 342

There are two fire-places in each hut, and the customs previously enumerated about stopping at the first or second cooking place are the same as among the Bantu Kavirondo. 354

Young girls sleep in a hut with the other girls of the village in the care of an old woman. The boys of the village sleep in a hut by themselves. The villages are roughly circular. The huts are not arranged in any particular order, but the huts of one man are generally side by side. The huts of the young men are usually near the gates, and they are supposed to watch the gates in case of any attempt being made to steal the cattle. 513 361 883

On entering a village the hut directly opposite the gate is generally the hut of the principal wife of the headman of the village, or the headman of that part of the village. 361

Food products.—Mtama, sweet potatoes, a little *wimbi*, Indian corn, and also pumpkins, semsem, and pulse (*pojo*). Bananas are occasionally grown, but they do not flourish, as the country is a little too dry for them. A little tobacco and Indian hemp are grown. The Indian corn is not ground but generally eaten in an unripe state. 241

Ironwork.—They do not smelt iron, neither do they forge their hoes, which are all imported from Samia. They however forge spears, knives, bill hooks, axes, etc., from Samia iron. Among the Gemi tribe only people belonging to a clan called Uvino forge iron; the smiths are called Yothet-th. A rough kind of salt is made from the ashes of reeds and grass, and salt is also imported from Kisingiri. 325 439 258

Death customs.—When a person dies the body is immediately taken out of the house. Upon the death of a woman the brothers-in-law of the deceased dig the grave in the verandah of the house of the deceased; the corpse is buried on its left side with the hand under the head; the body is doubled up. A man, on the contrary, is buried on his right side with the hand under the head. In the case of a woman her relations and friends come and wail; her husband presents each clan that attends with a goat, the mourners stay three days. 764

The hut in which a person has died is used for a month; the neighbours then meet and drink *tembo*, and the house is broken down. Upon the death of a man his brother digs his grave; if the first wife he married is still alive he is buried in her house; if she is dead the man is buried in the verandah of the hut in which he died. [768]

Men only wail for one day, after that only women wail; the women wail for the whole of the first three days; after that the women of the village wail at dawn for fifteen days. 765

Signs of mourning.—Women wear a string of banana fibre round the forehead, they also wear a tail of white strings for about a month; the tail usually

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
FL11 Luo FL11

753 The ghosts are usually those of grandparents who afflict
755 grandchildren because their father has failed to fulfil the
775 duties of a son to his father in his old age, either by direct unkindness or by neglect. The medicine-man will now order
769 a shrine to be built by the grave of the grandparent concerned, and the sick person's father offers a goat or a sheep at the grave, pouring out the blood as an offering upon the ground, and then eating the meat on the spot with a few relatives. The medicine-man is afterwards able to treat the sick man with reasonable hope of restoring him to health, because the offended ghost has now been pacified and will allow the sick man to benefit by the treatment. Sometimes sickness is transferred to another person by rubbing herbs over the sick man and burying them in the road for some other person to walk over and thus contract the disease.

828 **Ghostly possession.** Fits are supposed to be the manifesta-
775 tion of ghostly possession. They can often be overcome by
761 giving the person warm blood to drink drawn from the veins of an ox and by feeding the patient with a generous diet. During the time a fit lasts the man is held down, if he is violent, until the attack is over. Should a man fall into the fire during a fit, no help is rendered and he is allowed to burn to death, because it is said that the ghost has claimed him and would resent any interference and would affect the person who attempted to rescue the stricken man with a similar malady. A drum beaten near a person subject to fits is said to bring on an attack of the malady.

764 **Death and mourning.** When a person dies, his legs are bent up into a squatting posture, the right arm is raised under the head and the death-wail commences. The dead are not washed but merely have their ornaments stripped off; an ox or a cow is then killed and the body is wrapped in the skin and is stitched up tightly in it. The grave is dug in the house. When the body is laid in it, all the relatives stand round with their backs towards it and, at a given signal, they stoop down and with their hands scrape the earth into the grave without looking where it falls. After they have scraped in earth for some moments they walk out of the house, and the brother of

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
FL11 Luo FL11

the deceased enters with a son of the dead man and together they fill in the grave and beat the floor hard. Some of the blood of the animal that was killed is poured into the grave as it is being filled with earth; and, after the grave is filled up, four pieces of meat are taken and one piece is placed at each corner of it. A pot of newly brewed beer is placed on the grave and left to ferment until it runs over the sides when the relatives drink it. When the duty of filling in the grave is completed, all the mourners wash, shave their heads and have a meal of the meat of the animal that was killed. The widows remove their girdles and place them on the roof of the house containing the grave. A goat is killed, and an elderly woman related to the deceased man ties a portion of the entrails of the goat round the waist and neck of each widow, and also winds a portion round her own neck; and this is worn by each widow during the period of mourning. On the following morning a grandson climbs the house and breaks the end off the central pole which stands out above the thatch; he also breaks the cooking-pot in which the deceased man's food was cooked. On the second day after the funeral a goat is brought into the house and each of the mourners strikes it with his fist and kicks it; it is then taken and killed, and its flesh is cooked in part of the broken cooking-pot and eaten by the mourners. After this meal the male relatives go to war against some group of their tribe who are said to have been the cause of the man's death. After mourning four days the party shave their heads and continue to the end of the mourning period without further shaving their heads or paring their nails. The widows continue to live in the house which contains the grave. When the ox or cow for the funeral ceremonies is killed, if the deceased is a man, it is speared to the heart; but, when the deceased is a woman, it is speared in the head between the horns. When the mourning ceremonies are ended, each widow makes a girdle, with the fringe at the back, which she wears for a year while she continues to live in the house containing the grave. At the end of the year she burns the girdle, goes to the river and washes, takes her old girdle from the house-roof with her and leaves it in the river-bed. After washing

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
FL11 Luo FL11

765 she makes a new girdle from papyrus while still at the river, and wears it as she returns to her village. She is then free to remarry.

775 Dead people are sometimes said to come to life again. This is reported to take place within a short time after death. It is said that the spirit had gone on a journey and had returned after the man was thought to be dead, but in time to stop the funeral. The supposed dead person sneezes and revives, the sneezing being thought to be the signal that the spirit has returned from his journey.

764 **Death of a wife.** Should a wife die before her husband, her body is buried in the house, and, when the husband dies, he is buried in the goat-house near. He may not be buried in the same house with his wife. The animal offered at a man's funeral is always an ox, while it is an old cow that is offered at a woman's funeral. The skin from the animal is used to wrap the body as a shroud. The meat from the animal is divided in the following manner: a shoulder is retained for the dead and is eaten by the mourners at the grave, the second shoulder is for the relatives in the village, and the remainder, with the exception of the neck, is for the guests who live at a distance: the neck is given to the medicine-man.

766 762 A suicide is buried in the open, never in a house. Should the death have taken place in a house, it is burned down, for no one will live in it.

Warfare.

721 **Mode of conducting wars.** The people are not fond of war and fortunately their wars are never very serious matters. Cattle-lifting and women-stealing are the chief causes of fighting. The battles take place after short notice, when it is found that cattle have been robbed or when the alarm is given that a woman has been captured by some other clan. When a fight is impending, the attacking party drive a few cows to some spot where the other party may see them and challenge the others to come and take them. The party challenged must either attempt to carry off the cows while the others protect them, or they must pay a fine imposed by the attacking army.

11: Hartmann M-5 (ca. 1920) 1928 FL11 Luo FL11

would have supplied sufficient food for the whole village (about 50 people) for 3 months. — When all the beer is finished the bridegroom's father asks his host whether his son may now build his wife a hut, and whether she may stay with him definitely. The worthy parent will answer: "No, not yet, because the heifer for the father of the girl *(roch wuoro)* is to be brought still."

Now the relations of the bridegroom go home taking a hindleg of the cow along, which is to be carried by the bride. But she will say: "It does not behove that I should walk along the road with my father-in-law; I will come later." Somebody of the party carries the leg, and she follows next day. Henceforward she is allowed to enter her mother-in-law's hut, where she does the cooking for her husband, and stays no longer in the simba. Unless she is with child already she goes home again after a few weeks, because her father has not quite released her yet, and she still plays about with her girl-friends.

When her husband has found the heifer still wanted by her father, he takes it to him. Again he asks leave to build a hut for his wife. If the father agrees he returns with his wife and starts building at once. The woman stays with her husband definitely, for the full dowry has been paid.

Some time later the woman's father brews beer and sends word to his son-in-law, who gathers his brothers and friends to go to this beer party *(kisech kongo)*. All of them except the husband himself go to the hut of his mother-in-law, where the beer stands ready. Not until he has given her either a goat or a sheep is he allowed to enter. This animal has to be handed over not by the husband himself, but by a relation of his. With this beer party the full marriage ceremony ends.

The woman, though she has her own hut now, goes on cooking in her mother-in-law's hut. Five months after she has conceived she has regularly to take *yeath agulu* which medicine has to be warmed up every time before taking it. This she does in her own hut. However, the evening before she boils this medicine for the first time, the children of the kraal pick some vegetables and cook them in the woman's hut. This is the first food cooked there. Both husband and wife, and also the children who cooked them partake of these vegetables.

From now onwards she cooks all the food in her own hut, but her husband is not allowed to eat any of it yet. He goes for his meals to his mother's hut. After about 4 days the woman goes home once more to fetch a goat for her husband. With the goat and also some other meat and fish she returns to her husband. When this food is cooked she calls her husband and the men of the village for a little feast. On this occasion she gives the goat to her husband, thereby sealing the contract with him *(criso chwore)*.

Burial of a married Man.

In the olden days the death of a warrior was considered to be brought about by some enemy through witchcraft. This death had to be revenged. So the very next morning, before the man got buried, people got ready for a fight, and went out to the boundary of a hostile tribe to wage a war agains them. No sooner was the warcry raised or the hostile tribe got ready too, and came to the boundary. Both parties took some of their cattle with them. After the fight the victorious party took the opponents cattle as spoils.

11: Hartmann M-5 (ca. 1920)1928 FL11 Luo FL11

764 Since the Administration of the country by the "White Man" these wars
721 are a thing of the past. However, the old custom remains, in so far, that even at
178 present on the morning after a person's death his relations and tribesmen have a sham-fight, at the same places where formerly they used to fight their real wars.

764 The wailing at a person's death spreads the news in no time, and at day-break all the men of that tribe attire themselves in their wardress, after having smeared themselves with oker and mud, and go out with their shields and spears. They gather at the kraal of the deceased, and having brought some cattle they go out to the uninhabited boundary of their district for their sham-fight.

There the performance starts with the killing of a chicken as a sacrifice to the gods, that they might favour and bless their war, just as they did in the days of old. Whilst the old folks roast and eat the chicken the warriors dash forward to their imaginary enemy here and there stabbing a tuft of grass or throwing their spears in a bush, and rushing back again as if the enemy was on their heels.

When after an hour or two of fighting the enemy is defeated, they go back to the village of deceased. From the moment he gave up his ghost (and sometimes before that) the people of the village have been bewailling him, running in and out of the hut, shouting and yelling all the time. They have also taken his cattle one by one to the doorway of his hut, that they too might bewail their deceased master.

And now, after the warriors have returned, the corpse is put in front of the hut. The warriors and the people of the surrounding country (sometimes thousands of them, if deceased was a chief, a witchdoctor, a rainmaker, or other important personage) go up to the corpse, and bewail it, running in and out and round the kraal, all of them yelling like madmen.

The warriors also take their "spoils" up to the corpse, to show the spirit of deceased that his death has been revenged.

Whilst this is going on three men are digging the grave. If he was a rich man, i. e. if he had many wives, the grave is dug next to the hut in which he died, after a small temporary hut has been built over the spot. If he had only few wives then the grave is dug inside the hut in which he died. The corpse is lowered in the grave by 4 men, and the children of the village with their hands and feet scrape the earth into the grave, always with their backs towards the same. After the actual burial the wailing goes on for another half hour or so, whereupon all the outsiders return home.

In the evening the people of he kraal go to the grave with a chicken, which, held by the legs, is smitten with its head on the grave till it is dead. Then it is roasted and eaten. They also put a broken cooking pot on the grave, which they trample to pieces there. Then they kill a sheep, which is eaten by the men that night. Its skin is cut into narrow strips. These are tied round the right wrist of all the male inhabitants of the kraal, and round the left wrist of all the females. This finishes the ceremonies for the day.

765 Next morning arrangements are made in the open space outside the village for a dance. The older women beat a couple of drums, the young women and girls from he neighbourhood dance, the men and boys in their war-costume run about

11: Hartmann M-5 (ca. 1920) 1928 FL11 Luo FL11

food for the child, but they themselves only drink beer. On the last day all the iron, brass and other ornaments which deceased used to wear are sprinkled with some beer, made of kaffir-corn, which has previously been sacrificed. Then the ornaments are devided amongst the relations, who will wear them in future. After this all go home.

Next morning a sheep is killed and eaten. The wet skin is called the garment of deceased, and as such is worn for that day by his eldest son. At night it is slung over the gateway, where in time it rots away or some hyena finds it and makes off with it.

Every person, whether man, woman or child, is buried absolutely naked, and without any ornaments; even the little brass rings with a big blue bead each, which the old men wear all along the edge of both ears are taken out immediately after his death. To this rule there is one exception only. A *jabilo*, who is not an ordinary medicine-man, but one who has secret medicine, which he does not use for evil purposes except in warfare, is considered the greatest among men. For this reason he is specially honoured at his death. A big bull is killed and offered as a sacrifice, and the *jabilo* is buried in the fresh skin of the animal.

Burial of a Woman.

From the moment of a woman's death wailing goes on till next morning about 10 o'clock, when either her husband or her son dig the grave. All her ornaments are taken off, like at the occasion of a man's death.

Every woman is buried inside her own hut; because a woman is called the owner of the hut *(wonjot)*; hence at her death the hut has served its purpose.

When the grave is ready deceased's husband, assisted by two other people put her down in it, lying on her left side (men on their right). Her children fill up the grave scraping the earth with hands and feet, their backs towards the corpse. The wailing goes on for another half hour whilst the crowds gather.

Then all the women and girls prepare themselves for a kind of wardance to take place near the village. They take off their tassels which they throw on the roof deceased's hut. They smear themselves with mud, and dress themselves up in the war-dress of the men who came to the funeral (shields and spears left at home).

Whilst the girls and women are dancing to the beating of drums, the men and boys squat down in the village and smoke hemp. After about an hour they come back from the dance, return their apparel to the men and go home. But the men remain till the afternoon, and those living near by call again at night for a chat.

After 3 days the women of the neighbourhood gather again in order to cook and eat the dried meat, fish and other food which the deceased left in the hut at her death. After the meal they go to sweep the grave (on the 3rd day, not the 4th as after the burial of a man) gathering some earth of it in an old basket, which is put on the path outside the kraal together with her so-called pillow *(orindo)*. They also give away deceased's hoe to an old woman, and throw away its handle.

On the same day the husband of deceased and one old woman go round to the huts of the near relations, sprinkling in each hut some medicine, throwing in each hut the seedball of an Ochokplant, and gathering from its inhabitants a small

765 basketful of kaffir-corn. This corn is used to make beer from for the feast of shaving and smearing of the grave with mud, which takes place after 3 months (not 6, as in the case of husband's death). On that day also the parents of the deceased
587 woman bring another daughter, however small she may be at the time, which girl is to replace the deceased daughter, and will become the wife of the widower. They even may wait for a daughter still to be born, if deceased has no sister. But if the mother is old, and has no daughter to put in deceased's place, then the father may put a daughter by another wife in her place. This girl, though she may be a child in arms yet, is shown to the widower, who is not allowed to refuse her as his future wife, but has to wait till she is grown up. When the girl is about 10 years old a small temporary hut is built for her, in which she sleeps with her future husband for one night. Then she returns home till she is marriageable, after a heavy iron ring has been put round her left ankle, which remains as a sign, that she has taken the place of a deceased sister.

The widower, however, is at liberty to marry another girl in the meantime, but the deceased wife's sister will later be considered as his first wife (*dhako maluong*).

●764 On the morning after the death of either husband or wife 2 bulls are killed. The first is sacrificed and eaten, there and then, by anybody coming for the funeral, the other one is simply killed for the relations.

769 When about 12 months have elapsed after the death of a woman, the same customs of distributing the ornaments of deceased, and the brewing of beer for all the relations and neighbours are observed, as take place on the anniversary of the death of a married man.

Burial of a Child.

765 Small children, whether boys or girls are bewailed by the women only. The reason for this is that the people have a superstition which says that if a father bewails his child his wives will not bring forth any more.

Grown up boys and girls are bewailed by the men also, but only for a short time and not by big crowds. The mother may bewail her child for a period of about 2 months every morning for a short time. She sits down beside the grave, where
[276] she lights a little fire to protect herself agains the cold, Her wailing is interrupted now and again for the purpose of smoking a pipe.

765 After the child's death the mother may not get her head shaven until after
834 her next menstruation. Only after this her husband is allowed to sleep in her hut and observe the conjugal rights. Until he has done this the husband is not allowed to observe those rights with any of his other wives. If he would break this rule he would make the mother of the dead child barren for the rest of her life.

764 Adult boys are buried on the left hand side of the hut a few yards away, smaller boys on the same side but under the roof outside; girls in the same way, but on the right hand side.

For adult children, whether boys or girls, the usual dancing, etc. take place, the same as for married people.

If a girl dies for whom the dowry has been fully paid, but for some reason

½ [The third day after burial. – Analyst]

11:Hartmann M-5 (ca. 1920) 1928 FL11 Luo FL11

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has not yet gone to live with her husband, the corpse is carried to the village of her husband and buried there, outside the hut which was already built for her.

765

On the 3rd day after the burial of a child the grave is swept, and some of the earth is poured along the wall of the hut without any further ceremonies.

763

If a woman dies who is with child a slight incision is made below her navel, but no attemp is made to save the child.

764 234

P. S. On the day of the burial of either husband or wife the cattle are not milked. They are driven outside the kraal, but are not herded. When they return at night they are milked, but next morning the milk is not churned. The fresh milk is drunk by the boys of the kraal and the neighbourhood.

765 241

After the death of a man or a grown up boy no cultivation or weeding of gardens is done by the inhabitant of the kraal for the next 4 days; after the death of a woman or adult girl for the next 3 days. The same regulations holds good on the day of the funeral of a child and on the 3rd day after its burial when the grave is swept.

If either the father or mother of twins dies the whole neighbourhood will abstain from cultivation or weeding for either 4 or 3 days. If one would break these rules the gardens that season would yield no crops or a very poor one.

231 Old cows which have stopped producing are usually killed
[837] and their meat exchanged for millet or maize which in turn
is bartered for new young heifers, bulls, goats or sheep, or if
necessary used for consumption. The same applies to oxen
764 although these are usually exchanged directly for other stock.
A heifer is usually worth two bulls or young oxen. The special
oxen used by their owners as companions when they attend
funeral mournings are seldom exchanged, but are slaughtered
when they get old, the owners preparing special feasts as a
tribute to their past service. A young man who has ridden a
special ox at funeral dances does not eat the meat when the
ox dies as a result of disease or accident. These "companions"
are usually honoured by having bells fixed on special leather
straps fastened around their necks. Some he-goats are also so
honoured. The ringing of these bells will sometimes stop
hyenas from entering the kraal and may help in tracing animals
when grazing in bushy country. The ears of the owners are
usually sensitive to the sound of the bells of their own oxen.

231 The Luo do not like polled cattle because some of them
[842] believe that such animals are unlucky. They say that if a
polled animal is paid as part of a dowry the woman is likely
to be sterile. They are very fond of oxen with long horns or
those with peculiarly or funnily placed horns. During drinking
parties the owners of such oxen "show off" by placing their
arms in different positions to demonstrate the directions of the
[554] horns of their oxen. This performance is a sign of wealth
because the average man does not possess a number of oxen
with abnormally-placed horns. Long-horned cows are not of
special value. The horns of dangerous animals are cut so as to
reduce the risk of people and young animals being horned.

Beautifying animals by branding which is practised by
some African tribes is not favoured by the Luo. The only
method that is used to increase the natural beauty of cattle,
especially bull calves, is to trim the ears. Trimming is, however,
[232] also done as a treatment for east coast fever because in this
disease the animal appears dull and heavy as if suffering from
headache, and the Luo believe that by letting a little blood
from the ear the headache is eased.

231 Luo cattle-owners do not usually go in for special colours,
822 but there are some colours which are considered objectionable.
Pure white is not liked because white animals are usually
susceptible to skin diseases, accidental skin lesions and to
marking by tick-bites which usually remain permanently
conspicuous. Another objectionable colour is striped, dark,
dull-brown. Animals with these mixed colours are not accepted
for dowry because the disagreeable colours may cause disagree-
ment during the arrangement of the marriage or between the
wife and her husband. Brown is unanimously favoured because
it is considered resistant to skin diseases and accidental injuries.

14: Johnston G-4, 5 (no date) 1904 FL11 Luo FL11

but until the child begins to cut its teeth. The mother does not go out to cultivate for nine days after the birth. If a woman has had two children previously who have died, she follows the same ceremony as that described among the Bantu Kavirondo. When the child has been brought back by an old woman, it is redeemed by the father, who then bores the lobe of the right ear and inserts an ear-ring of brass wire. The child is thenceforth called "Owiti," if a boy; if a girl, "Awiti," meaning "the child that has been thrown away." The old woman who picks up the child is regarded as its foster-mother. Twins are considered lucky, though their arrival is attended by a good many ceremonies and by propitiatory dances which are of an obscene nature.

Fig. A BEHIRE MAN FROM KAVIRONDO, SHOWING DEEP CUT BETWEEN EAR AND EYEBROW

When a person dies, the corpse is immediately taken out of the house. If it be a woman, her brothers-in-law dig the grave in the verandah of the house. The corpse is buried on its left side with the head under the head. In the case of a woman's death, her relatives and friends come and wail. Her husband presents each clan that attends with a goat. The mourners stay for three days. The hut in which a person has died is used for a month. The neighbours then meet together and drink beer, and the house is broken down. Upon the death of a man his brother digs his grave, and he is buried in the house of his first wife, if she is still living. If she is dead, he is buried in the verandah of his own house. Men only wail for one day. After that only the women wail, at first for three days, and then at dawn for fifteen days.

As a sign of mourning the women wear a string of banana fibre round the forehead. They also wear a black tail fringed with white strings for about a month. Others smear themselves with white earth. Relatives of

Burial Customs of the Wa-Kavirondo in the Kisumu Province. 35

By A. E. Millikin

764 When a Kavirondo dies he or she, as the case may be, is stripped of everything in the shape of clothing and ornaments and these, as a rule, are distributed amongst the children, should the dead person have any; if not, they are taken by the near relatives. As soon as the person has expired the relatives in the same "boma" commence howling and crying, and in some cases this is done before the sick person has expired, but is close to death.

The first persons informed of the death are those relatives and friends residing close at hand, who arrive quickly to join in the mourning and do their share of crying.

The relatives and friends from a distance begin to arrive decked out in all their finery, bringing food for the dead, and also some of their cattle, as a rule a few cow and bull calves. The mourning lasts for about a fortnight, but the body is kept only for about five hours after death, when it is buried underneath the floor of the hut of the dead person; but should several people have been buried there before and no space left, the body is buried just outside the hut, on the left-hand side.

As a rule after one person is buried in the hut, if it is intended to bury a second, and even a third person in the same hut, it is customary to knock out the back part of the hut and enlarge it.

775 The Kavirondo belief is that the dead can hear, and this is their reason for burying their dead in and close to their huts, as they like the dead to hear what they say.

764 The grave is dug about 4 feet deep and is circular, and the dead person is put there in a doubled-up position. The body is buried quite naked, but sometimes the skin on which the person slept, or which he wore, is placed at the bottom of the grave.

When the grave is filled up, the earth is put back in small pieces, and is pressed tightly down, so that when all the soil is put back the surface is absolutely level, and to the casual observer it would not appear that the earth had been disturbed. As a precaution against hyenas and other wild animals a species of cactus is placed for a few days over the grave.

765 Should the dead person be a grown male, the wife or mother or the nearest relative of the dead man will cry continually for three months for about an hour before day break, but will stop when day breaks.

A peculiar custom is followed by the near relatives, who, during the first few days of mourning, smear their faces with wood ashes.

761 When a grown-up person dies, male or female, neighbours will come and hold a "ngoma" (dance), dressed up in all their finery, especially the warriors, who walk into the "boma" and march round on the inside, passing the hut of the dead person and sticking their spears into the roof of the hut. They continue to march round two or three times, finally passing the dead person's hut and withdrawing their spears,

15: Millikin U-4 (no date) 1906 FL11 Luo FL11

when they pass outside; this happens before the "ngoma," and is a sort of honour to the dead. 764

The wife or wives of the deceased person go to the sons, the eldest having preference, but in no case does a son take his own mother, and any property of the deceased man is taken by the sons in the proportion of the dowry originally paid by the father for the wife which each son has claimed. 428 587

Should a wife of the dead man have a daughter, or several daughters and sons, the dowry received in the event of one of them being married will go to the girl's brother, and not to the step-father; but in the event of the girl having no brother, the step-father will claim the dowry. 428

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[p.55]

16: Northcote G-5 (no date) 1907 FL11 Luo FL11

chicken, some *utama*[1] and some native beer. He goes away again, having had no intercourse with his intended, and returns in a few days' time and goes through the form of carrying her off; she stops at his village for some days and the important rite of cooking the first dinner for him is gone through; this may be taken to intimate that she accepts him as her husband. She then goes home and the husband pays a portion of the dowry; he comes again and carries her away and pays another portion, and so on, till the dowry is paid off and the bargain is ratified. Should the woman prove childless, or if she dies shortly after the marriage, the dowry can be reclaimed by the husband, though it is more usual for her sister to take her place. Should she, at the time of marriage, be possessed of children, legitimate or otherwise, they become her husband's property. The dowry is also recoverable if the woman deserts him for another man.

Children are sometimes contracted for marriage at a very early age, but in such a case, the girl remains with her parents until the age of puberty. The value of the dowry has greatly decreased since the cattle plague of 1883, but is again increasing. Before that date twenty head of cattle, besides goats, grain, etc., was not uncommonly asked and obtained. To-day seven head of cattle is a handsome "dot," and the price has been known to fall as low as one bull and twenty goats, though a heifer and a bull is the usual minimum. The birth of the first child is also an occasion for a feast; frequently, a child is named after the hour at which it was born, *e.g.*, *onyango*, morning; *ocking*, noon; *odiambo*, afternoon; *otieno*, night. On other occasions some deceased relative appears to the mother in her sleep shortly before birth, and his name is adopted; or, if a child be born posthumously, the father's ghost appears and dictates the name. The Jaluo are very fond of nicknames, which are often passed on to descendants, though their significance is lost; *e.g.*, *okelo*—the man who owned much *utama*; *oliech*—the man who killed an elephant. Other nicknames are given on account of some personal peculiarity; *e.g.*, *obongo*—the man like a locust.

A funeral, however, is the greatest ceremony of all. While the sick man is dying his relatives howl in chorus round his hut, while the doctors rattle stones in gourds and puff clouds of tobacco smoke around the invalid, their object, undoubtedly, being to drive away the evil spirits. Next day there is a great dance, at which all the deceased's relations and friends turn up; if the dead man is a chief the whole clan is represented. Every man is dressed in full war paint and brings his best bull along with him. For a while they stay in the village lamenting, while the mother or chief wife of the deceased adorns herself with the dead man's goat skin and his tuft of hair, as mentioned above, and then runs round and round the village rattling a gourd and singing incantations. Then the visitors come out, having refreshed the inner man with beer and tobacco, and proceed to charge up and down, hanging on to their bull's tails and pricking the unfortunate beasts to encourage them to go faster. When thoroughly exhausted they collect

[1] Millet.

16: Northcote G-5 (no date) 1907 FL11 Luo FL11

together again, and singly or in twos and threes run out and go through a fight with some invisible foes, again presumably, the evil spirits. They are very serious all the while, and the rest watch in silence their champions as they charge, retreat and cower down behind the huge shields. Then comes more feasting, with the customary offering to the sun, and finally they disperse. 764

The wailing is kept up in the case of a chief for six days, and performed twice a day at sunrise and sunset, but after the day of the dance each village mourns by itself; for a common person three days is the limit.

The corpse is buried in a recumbent position in the deceased's hut, but the hut continues to be occupied, generally by the deceased man's heir; it is not at once destroyed or disused, as some authorities, among them Sir C. Eliot, maintain. Last of all, when the mourning is over, an offering of beer, grain, and chicken flesh, is put on the grave.

The Jaluo religion is extremely slight. They worship the sun, and to a less extent the moon. They regard the sun as a deity seldom beneficent, more often malignant, and usually apathetic; as one of them said to the writer, "It does not matter how much you pray, you fall sick and die just the same." The offerings made at all important occasions in their daily life they make more with the idea of appeasing him than of obtaining positive benefits. 776 781 782

Witchcraft, however, and demonology occupy their minds far more. The wizard is greatly dreaded, and it is easy for an unscrupulous Kavirondo to obtain his neighbour's property by accusing him of having killed one of his relations by witchcraft, knowing that he will have his neighbours' support and sympathy. The wizard is sought both for good and evil purposes; his aid is invoked alike to detect criminals and to do harm to an adversary. In a recent case brought before the writer a man was accused of having murdered one of his wives by witchcraft. According to his accusers, the supposed murderer missed his razor and accused two of his wives of the theft. They both denied all knowledge of the missing article, and he gave them till the evening of that day to find it. When their term of grace came to an end, and the razor was not produced, he was alleged to have struck one of his wives, who was on the point of bearing a child. He then produced two charms which he affixed to their respective huts, threatening that the thief would be detected by the charm and would die. Next day the woman who was said to have been struck died after producing a still-born child. The curious result was that the man was tried for murder, the accusers believing that the crime had been committed by witchcraft, and the magistrate holding that, if the man caused his wife's death at all, it was by the blow which he was alleged to have given her. The blow turned out to be a myth, and the man was discharged, much to his accusers' disgust. 754 754 674

When a Kavirondo wishes to kill his enemy secretly, the usual method is to bury a dead rat or chicken at his victim's door. If, when the latter comes out the next morning, he treads on the spot where the animal is buried, it is believed that he will die that day. 754

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

diagram, p. 17). It is therefore difficult to give a precise account of the relation between ancestor worship and lineage formation. It is noteworthy, however, that the ritual formula at a sacrifice was not spoken by any particular descendant of the recipient of sacrifice, but by any elders of his lineage present, who repeated it in turn while waiting for the sacrificial bull to urinate or excrete. If it refused to do this it was rejected and another substituted, and it was the elder who was repeating the formula at the moment when the bull urinated or excreted who had to make the sacrifice. The usual formula was *wuoru, luong' wuoru ichiemo*—'our father, call your father and eat'—followed by the bidding of a blessing on the particular matter in hand. In the funeral ritual more emphasis seems to be laid on insulating the living from the ill will of the dead than on securing the status of the latter in the other world. Similarly at any sacrifice, ancestors called to share are bidden to give the blessings for which they are asked on pain of being jeered at and despised. Children may be named, according to the father's judgement, after various circumstances or persons linked with the child's birth or ascertained in dreams. But if the child cries unusually the diviner (*ajuoga*) is called to discover which ancestor is seeking to have the child named after it. In this way the child may be named after its own father or mother, or any other relative, male or female. The same group of names tends to occur frequently in converging lines of ascent, especially those of famous ancestors, which are repeated particularly often, but there is no regular belief in the necessary reincarnation of ancestors in alternate generations.

IV. LINEAGE CONCEPTS

THE special terms which the Luo use for lineages show the distinctions which they make between different aspects of the activity of these groups. Frequently all these terms may be applied to the same group on different occasions depending on the context. The most important of these terms are *dhoot*, *gweng'*, *libamba*, and *anyuola*. *Gweng'* and *dhoot* are used of class A segments only, *anyuola* of class B segments only, and *libamba* may be used of either. The use of these terms is always logical when interpreted in relation to the structural position of the speaker, but their etymology does not always seem consistent with this unless it is understood in a symbolic sense. It may be best to give a general account of the usage and etymology of each one, followed by some quotations from informants.

Dhoot (pl. *dhoudi*) is used for all those lineages which are corporate landholding units. They are the lineages already referred to as class A. Some idea of the variations in their size and population is given in the population figures included in Figs. 1 and 2, and the maps (Figs. 3, 4, and 5). They carry general social functions. Each manages its political, jural, economic, ritual, and other affairs through a council of elders representing its major segments and recognizing one of their number as leader. Organized on a territorial basis, they are the units of primary settlement or multiples of them,[1] responsible for the acquisition, apportionment, and use of land. They are the basis of a whole series of corporate group activities ranging from

[1] By settlement I mean simply a defined area of territory, containing the dwellings and all the land resources of a specified social group. The Luo have no villages in the sense of recognized aggregations of dwellings larger than those of the family.

[text continues on p. 27]

19:Wilson E-5 (ca. 1950) 1960
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762 The elders claim that her life was a tragic one, and that her
159 sister had hanged herself a few years before and had returned for her.

The next case is the one mentioned earlier in connection with case number 13 involving the mother of a girl who had committed suicide after her mother had forced her to marry against her wishes.

Suicide Case No. 21.

This mother realized that her daughter's death was due to her action. She therefore tried to commit suicide by hanging shortly after she heard the news, but was prevented from doing so by her husband and his children. A week later, she tried to hang herself on a tree by the river but she had been followed by her co-wives, who cut her down in time. Finally, a month later she hanged herself from the roof of her hut and, although she was cut down while still alive by her watchful co-wives, she died shortly afterwards from a broken neck.

Profound grief lay behind the next case. It was related to me by an informant who was present at the time.

Suicide Case No. 22.

A man in the prime of life died suddenly. His death came as a shock to all his friends and relatives, among whom he was regarded very highly. This man had two wives and a mistress (*nyas gogo*). The latter was away at the time of his death visiting her family, and she had been cursed there by her father because she refused to return to the family into which she had been legally married. Her father refused to return the bride-wealth, or to accept bride-wealth from her lover, with whom she was living. When she returned to the village of her lover,
● [764] she heard the wailing of the women and knew that her lover was dead. On such occasions it is customary to run into the

19:Wilson E-5 (ca. 1950) 1960
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village straight to the hut which houses the body and to fall prostrate on it, wailing and crying. However, on this occasion, the woman walked very slowly into the village as if in a daze and without crying and without wailing and without saying a word to anyone. She entered her house and locked the door. Those in the village immediately became suspicious and broke the door down but within those five minutes she was found dead from hanging. The villagers told me that she believed the curse of her father had killed the man she loved, so she went to join him.

159 762 [764]

Suicide Case No. 23.

An elderly woman, whose husband had died, depended on her children for sustenance. In her old age she contracted a disease similar to leprosy. Her son, as is customary on such occasions, destroyed her house in the compound and built one for her outside of the homestead. One morning they found that she had hanged herself because, they stated, of the pain and trouble she experienced through her illness and because she was so unhappy that she could not take her grandchildren to teach and love as was her role in life as a grandmother. Her illness barred her from all of the village activities, and she felt that she was no longer part of the family. Her ghost was not considered to be any more dangerous than that of a person who died a normal death because she was old and her suicide was from old age and weariness. She held no grudge against anyone.

762 159 888 734 [603]

[pp. 214-272 not processed]